



**Ethics and Communication – COMM 215-203
Spring 2016
Monday 4:15 – 6:45 p.m.
Corboy Law Center, Room 105
Jill Geisler, Instructor**

Office: SoC 220

Office hours: In person Monday: 2-4pm. Other in-person and phone hours by appointment

Email: jgeisler@luc.edu

Email protocol: Use your Loyola account, a specific subject line and identify yourself in the signature. My reply may take up to 24 hours.

Office phone: 312-915-6929 - **Personal cell:** 414-628-9706 (for emergencies)

Course purpose and learning outcomes:

Together, we will:

- Gain a deeper understanding of ethical and moral principles
- Connect those principles to personal and professional decision-making
- Identify logical fallacies and cognitive biases and how to mitigate them
- Develop a process for recognizing, addressing and resolving ethical challenges
- Deepen our commitment to sound moral and ethical judgment in service to society.

Texts:

Book: *Media Ethics: Key Principles for Responsible Practice* by Patrick Lee Plaisance

Book: *You are Not So Smart* by David McRaney

Movie: "Spotlight"

News media: Be a student of current events and stories involving media criticism.
Choose media outlets that provide a quality, balanced diet.

Other readings as assigned

Expectations:

Attendance: Show up when the class starts; stay until we're finished.

Work ethic: Arrive prepared, meet deadlines, participate and have fun, too.

Technology: Please bring your laptops and tablets for class work. ***But know this: research says we really can't multi-task.*** So, if you choose to dive into Facebook or email during class, you're not fully engaged. Please stay with us.

Spelling, grammar and writing skills: All are important and will affect your grade. If you're not confident in your skills, get a buddy to proofread for you before submitting an assignment.

Research and reasoning: Valid, research-based sourcing matters. Wikipedia is not a primary source for this class, but it can lead you to potential sources. We'll share opinions in class, but opinions without strong supporting data hold significantly less weight.

Trust: Respect for each other and for human dignity form the foundation of our robust discussions. In the words of ethics and diversity writer Keith Woods, let's "challenge with passion but not poison."

Grades and How They're Earned:

Your grade will be determined by your class participation along with 2 presentations and 3 papers (descriptions follow and are also available in the "Assignments" area of Sakai. These are designed to help ethical and critical thinking concepts become a memorable and useful part of your life.

- Class Participation - **200 points**
- Creative Challenge #1: Ethical Theories/Thinkers Presentation - **100 points**
- Creative Challenge #2: Bias and Fallacy Forum Presentation - **100 points**
- "Spotlight" Ethical Analysis Paper - **150 points**
- Native Advertising Analysis Paper - **150 points**
- Final Paper: Ethical Case Study - **300 points**

Total possible points: 1,000

Grade scale:

1,000-930 = **A**
929-900 = **A-**
899-870 = **B+**
869-830 = **B**
829-800 = **B-**
799-770 = **C+**
769-730 = **C**
729-700 = **C-**
699-670 = **D+**
669-630 = **D**
Below 629 = **F**

Graded Class Assignments

Creative Challenge #1 - Ethical Theories/Thinkers Presentation

Due February 1

Read Plaisance Chapters One & Two.

Then create a 3-minute presentation that pays tribute to famous ethical thinkers or drives home the key ethical frameworks. The form is completely up to you; read it, sing it, rap it, sketch it, project it. Just come prepared to deliver.

You may do this solo or with classmates, just as long as all team members fully participate. You will present these to the class on February 1.

Provide me with a hard copy of your presentation in class. Make certain it is clearly identified as your work.

Our goal is to make these sometimes arcane theories memorable to us through your creative presentations, so have fun.

Native Advertising Analysis Paper

Due March 21

Read The Federal Trade Commission: Native Advertising: A Guide for Businesses
<http://1.usa.gov/1NBDzcP>

Then, find the native ad of your choice and write an analysis of it. Your paper should:

- Describe the ad. Link to it if possible, as well.
- Determine whether the ad conforms to the FTC standards. Explain your reasoning.
- If the ad conforms to the FTC standards, do you feel it is also ethical? Explain your reasoning.
- What is your advice for producers and consumers of native advertising?

This paper should be a minimum of three pages, double spaced, normal (12 point) font. Cite any sources you use in footnotes.

Creative Challenge #2 - Bias and Fallacy Forum Presentation

Due April 11

Select one cognitive bias or logical fallacy. Become an expert on it.

Then, create a 3-minute presentation that teaches the rest of us how to spot it (using at least one example), explaining why it can interfere with good ethical decision-making, and offering insight on what to do to mitigate against it in ourselves and others.

Just as with the first Creative Challenge, the form of your presentation is completely up to you; read it, sing it, rap it, sketch it, present it as a PowerPoint or video. Each class member will present in our Bias and Fallacy Forum during our April 11th class.

Provide me with a hard copy of your presentation in class. Make certain it is clearly identified as your work.

Resources:

The book “You Are Not So Smart” by David McRaney is a good source. Another is Business Insider: “20 Cognitive Biases That Screw Up Your Decisions,” by Samantha Lee and Shana Lebowitz: <http://www.businessinsider.com/cognitive-biases-that-affect-decisions-2015-8>
There are many others, and you are more than welcome to go beyond what I’ve suggested.

“Spotlight” Ethical Analysis Paper

Due April 25

See the movie “Spotlight.” Take special note of the ethical challenges faced by characters in the movie and the organizations for which they worked.

Then, write an analysis of those ethical challenges, answering the following questions:

1. “Spotlight” has been reviewed as a fairly straightforward representation of the Boston Globe’s investigative reporting of the clergy abuse scandal. What was your overall impression of the film – and why?
2. Identify at least three ethical challenges faced by individuals or organizations in the film. Describe them in detail.
3. Explain how those challenges were addressed or resolved, for better or for worse.
4. What are some key lessons of “Spotlight” for both producers and consumers of media?

Bonus points: “Spotlight” is a drama, not a documentary. This means that the filmmakers may add, subtract or change details of events at their discretion. Can you find any evidence of that happening in this film? If so, what ethical lessons should we take away from that?

Your paper should be at least 4 pages, double-spaced, with normal (12 point) font. Cite your sources, using footnotes.

Final Project Paper: Ethical Case Study

Due May 2 before 6:45pm

Instead of a final exam, you will demonstrate what you've learned this semester by analyzing a real-world ethical challenge in media. The more recent the case, the better. In this paper, you should:

- Describe the situation in detail
- List the key ethical challenges in the event
- Evaluate the response to those challenges – for better or worse
- Suggest other alternatives if you are describing flawed decision-making or, if the decision-making was done effectively, outline what contributed to the effectiveness.
- Refer to guiding principles, where applicable.
- Identify the key lessons for producers and consumers of content that can be learned from this study.

This paper should be a minimum of 5 pages, double-spaced, using regular (12 point) font. Cite sources with footnotes.

Note: Submit your case study idea to me before writing your paper, and do so no later than April 18th. Earlier is better. You may submit your idea by email: jgeisler@luc.edu or in-person during any class prior to the 18th. I want to make certain you get off to a good start and that we have a good variety of cases being analyzed by class members.

Deadlines and Submitting Assignments:

Don't blow a deadline. It will affect your grade. Assignments are due at the beginning of class via the Sakai site or if instructed by me, in stapled hard copy format brought to class. (Don't email assignments directly to me.)

Class Schedule:

This class is long – two and a half hours. Although we live in a world of short attention spans, I'm confident we can use this time so well it will fly by. I believe you deserve more than a lecture-a-thon. During each class, you can expect to do some combination of the following:

• Listen	• Speak
• Watch	• Write
• Read silently	• Read aloud
• Challenge	• Collaborate
• Laugh	• Imagine
• Present to the class	• Provide feedback to others

The Class -- Week-by-Week Rundown:

Here's a look at the topics we'll cover along with related assignments. **Note: the class may shift focus in response to current events, serendipity, and the availability of guest speakers. Expect changes.**

Week 1 - January 17: MLK Day Holiday – no class

If you want to get a jump on things, read Plaisance, Chapters One & Two. It will give you an extra week to work on your Creative Challenge assignment, which is due February 1. It is described in the Week 2 info below and is also posted in "Assignments" in Sakai.

Also: Feel free to begin reading McRaney's "You Are Not So Smart." This is a book with 48 short entries about biases, logical fallacies and flawed decision-making. You will need to have the book finished by March 21, in time for that day's class discussion. You may also use the book as a possible source for your Creative Challenge #2 – your "Bias and Fallacy Forum" presentation on April 11. It is described in "Assignments" in Sakai.

Week 2 -- January 25: Who Are We and What Do We Stand For?

Our focus will be the ethical foundations of our lives and of this class. We'll look inward and at the weeks ahead. We'll start building this class as a community of learners who are committed to critical thinking and a clear process for making ethical decisions as people who consume, create and act upon information in its many forms.

Assignments for next week:

- Read: Plaisance Chapters One & Two.
- Produce: Creative Challenge #1 – Ethical Thinkers/Theories presentation. Develop a 3-minute presentation that pays tribute to famous ethical thinkers or drives home the key ethical frameworks. The form is completely up to you; read it, sing it, rap it, sketch it, project it. Just come prepared to deliver. You may do this solo or with classmates, just as long as all team members fully participate. Due next week, Feb. 1.

Week 3 -- February 1: Ethics Questions: What Do We Know, What Do We Need to Know – and Who's at the Table?

Class members will share their Creative Challenge #1 Presentations and provide a hard copy of their presentation to me in class.

Then: our focus will be on the intersection of ethics and diversity. How does the inclusion or exclusion of others influence the framing of narratives in mass media? What process can we use to produce the most accurate, contextual accounts?

Guest/Skype: **Keith Woods, NPR - VP for Diversity in News and Operations**

Keith Woods is an expert in both ethics and diversity. He is the former Dean of Faculty at the Poynter Institute. He worked at The New Orleans Times-Picayune as a sportswriter, news reporter, city editor, editorial writer, and columnist. He is the co-author of "The Authentic Voice: The Best Reporting on Race and Ethnicity."

Assignments for next week:

- Read: Society of Professional Journalists on Plagiarism: <http://www.spj.org/ethics-papers-plagiarism.asp>
- Columbia Journalism Review: "Why Plagiarize When You Can Rip Off a Writer's Thoughts?" by Marc Fisher: http://www.cjr.org/analysis/steal_this_idea.php
- Read: American Society of News Editors profile of Marty Kaiser: <http://asne.org/files/KaiserProfile.pdf>

Week 4 -- February 8: Plagiarism and Giving Credit Where It is Due

Today, anyone can create and publish content. It can be completely original or derivative of the work of others. But when does content based on materials already developed by others cross the line into plagiarism? How can plagiarism be prevented and what should the consequences for a plagiarist and that individual's employer?

Guest: **Marty Kaiser, editor emeritus, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel**

Marty Kaiser is one of America's most celebrated newspaper editors, with experience at papers of all sizes, multiple Pulitzers earned on his watch, and a passion for ethical watchdog journalism. He is a past president of the American Society of News Editors

Assignments for next week:

- Read: American Press Institute: "7 Things We Learned about Fact Checking This Year" by Jane Elizabeth: <https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/fact-checking-project/7-things-we-learned-about-fact-checking-this-year/>
- Read: NeimanLab: "Inside the Star Chamber: How Politifact Tries to Find Truth in a World of Make-Believe" by Andrew Phelps: <http://www.niemanlab.org/2012/08/inside-the-star-chamber-how-politifact-forges-truth-in-the-world-of-make-believe/>
- Read: Politifact: "7 Steps to Better Fact-Checking" by Angie Drobnic Holan: <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2014/aug/20/7-steps-better-fact-checking/>
- Attend if you can: American Press Institute Fact-Checking Program Friday, April 12 at Loyola.

Week 5 -- February 15: Verification and Fact Checking

Media outlets and private citizens now have access to fact-checking tools, thanks to digital resources. Why is fact-checking important, how can it be improved, and why doesn't it always have the results we think it might?

Guest/Skype: **Amy Hollyfield, Deputy Managing Editor/Politics & Business, Tampa Bay Times**

Amy Hollyfield directs state and national coverage, business news and oversees *Politifact*, which won a 2009 Pulitzer Prize for national reporting. She is an expert in fact-checking.

Assignments for next week:

- Read: Plaisance, Chapters 3 & 8 – pay special attention to the references to the role of ethics theory and autonomy to professionals who work in all forms of media, not just journalism. Think about corporate, government information and non-profit communications.
- Read: Public Relations Society of America Member Code of Ethics: <https://www.prsa.org/aboutprsa/ethics/codeenglish/#.VpFpuZMrJ-U>

Week 6 -- February 22: Ethics of Corporate/Government/ Non-Profit Communications

When your role is to represent the best interests of your organization, what ethical obligations do you have? Who are your primary stakeholders? How do you balance transparency with privacy or other values such as safety or business success?

Guests: **Patti Gorsky, President & CEO, Make-A-Wish of Wisconsin** and **Roseann St. Aubin, Public Education Communication Specialist**

***Patti Gorsky** has led Make-A-Wish since 1999, with previous service as director of community affairs for a television station and press secretary to a county executive. She is a recent graduate of the Harvard Business School Executive Education program in nonprofit management.*

***Roseann St. Aubin** is an independent communications consultant. She has served as communications director for school districts, government and private industry, after her first career as a television reporter and anchor. In March she will be traveling to the Kingdom of Bhutan to lead training for on-air TV and radio journalists.*

Assignments for next week:

- Plaisance, Chapter 10 - pay special attention to the concept of community as it applies to advertising, public relations and journalism.
- New York Times: F.T.C. Guidelines on Native Ads Aim to Prevent Deception: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/23/business/media/ftc-issues-guidelines-for-native-ads.html?_r=0
- Federal Trade Commission: Native Advertising: A Guide for Businesses: <http://1.usa.gov/1NBDzcP>

Alert: Native advertising paper assignment – Due March 21

Alert: Final Project papers are due May 2. See “Assignments” for details.

Week 7 -- February 29: Advertising: Old, New and Native

Old business models of publishing are faltering. People don't like to pay for online content. They block ads online. In response, media outlets have turned to a new revenue source called “native advertising.” We will explore the legal and ethical implications of this form.

In class:

- John Oliver on native advertising: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_F5GxCwizc

Reminder: Native advertising paper assignment. Details in “Assignment” section of Sakai – Due March 21

Assignments for March 14:

- Read: Pew: Social Media Usage 2005-2015: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/10/08/social-networking-usage-2005-2015/>
- Read: Re/Code Kara Swisher: “Let’s End the War between Free Speech and Hate Speech” <http://recode.net/2016/01/07/lets-end-the-false-war-between-free-speech-and-hate-speech/>

Week 8 -- March 7: Spring Break – No classes

Have fun! Not to be a buzz killer, but remember the assignments for the class after you return:

Assignments for March 14:

- Read: Pew: Social Media Usage 2005-2015: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/10/08/social-networking-usage-2005-2015/>
- Read: Re/Code Kara Swisher: “Let’s End the War between Free Speech and Hate Speech” <http://recode.net/2016/01/07/lets-end-the-false-war-between-free-speech-and-hate-speech/>

Week 9 -- March 14: Social Media Ethics

Today, everyone can be a reporter, thanks to technology. We can gather information, capture images and share socially. We can upload our information to media outlets or self-publish. What ethical obligations come those opportunities?

Guest/Skype: **Christina Zdanowicz, CNN Senior Producer, Social Discovery & CNN iReport**

Christina Zdanowicz is at the forefront of social media at CNN, using it as a tool for the gathering and dissemination of news, as well as connecting with audiences. She’s also worked at the Chicago Tribune’s continuous news desk and WBBM-TV’s web desk, as well as for COSMS, a science magazine in Australia. Here’s a link to her CNN profile page with samples of her work:

<http://www.cnn.com/profiles/christina-zdanowicz-profile>

Assignments for next week:

- Finish reading “You Are Not So Smart”
- Read and download: Business Insider: “20 Cognitive Biases That Screw Up Your Decisions,” by Samantha Lee and Shana Lebowitz: <http://www.businessinsider.com/cognitive-biases-that-affect-decisions-2015-8>

Week 10 -- March 21: Cognitive Bias and Logical Fallacies

Having a moral compass, a process for ethical decision-making and even codes of ethics aren't enough. We need to understand how easily we can still make bad decisions. This will be our focus in preparation for the April 11th forum.

Assignments for next week:

- Read: "On The Media's Breaking News Consumer's Handbook"
<http://www.onthemedial.org/story/breaking-news-consumers-handbook-pdf/>
- Read: "What Breaking News Reveals about Your Newsroom Culture," by Jill Geisler
<http://www.poynter.org/2014/what-breaking-news-reveals-about-your-newsroom-culture/263907/>

Week 11 -- March 28: The Ethics of Breaking News

Breaking news often tests our ethical mettle, whether we are in the newsroom, the public information office, or even in our living rooms. We'll examine the land mines and how to avoid them.

Guest: To be determined –based on news events.

Assignments for next week:

- Read: Plaisance, Chapter 9
- Read: Fusion: "Privacy is Often an Afterthought When Convenience is King" by Felix Salmon: <http://fusion.net/story/250609/internet-of-things-vs-privacy/>
- Read: Center for Digital Ethics & Policy: "Getting Personal: Editorial Judgment in the Digital Public Square" by Jill Geisler <http://digitaethics.org/essays/editorial-judgment-in-the-digital-public-square/>

Week 12 -- April 4: Privacy in a Selfie World

We post photos on social media, share secrets in our texts, wear digital devices that track our movements – and have an expectation of privacy at the same time.

What are the ethical obligations of would-be publishers of that digital data?

Guest: to be determined

Assignments for next week:

- Complete your Creative Challenge Bias & Fallacy presentation. Bring a hard copy to class.
- Final Project alert: All papers will be due before 6:45pm Monday, May 2.

Week 13 -- April 11: Bias and Fallacy Forum

Today, class members share their Creative Challenge #2 presentations with the class and give me a hard copy of their presentation.

Assignments for next week:

- Make arrangements to see “Spotlight”
- See “Assignments” in Sakai for “Spotlight” Ethical Analysis Paper info.

Week 14 -- April 18: “Spotlight” Viewing/Paper writing

Field work: See the movie “Spotlight.” If you have seen it, use the time to produce your Ethical Analysis Paper on the issues raised in the movie. See “Assignments” for specifics. The paper is due April 25th.

You may also use this time to work on your Final Project paper.

Assignments for next week:

- Read: National Press Photographers Association Code of Ethics:
https://nppa.org/code_of_ethics
- Read and watch videos: “See How Music Changes a Story” by Regina McCombs
<http://www.poynter.org/2009/see-how-music-changes-a-story/94705/>

Week 15 -- April 25: Images, Sounds, Editing and Ethical Challenges

We’ll focus on the power of images, the issues raised by manipulation of images and sounds, and how to make good editing choices.

Guest: **Regina McCombs, Senior Editor for Visual News, Minnesota Public Radio**

Regina McCombs is responsible for visual content – and much more – on the website of MPR. She is an award-winning photojournalist who began in television and moved to print as an early leader in online and multi-platform news. She served on the faculty of the Poynter Institute and has trained journalists around the world.

Week 16 -- May 2 Final Exam week

Final papers due before 6:45pm today

Academic integrity

An ethics class should be the last place any of us needs to be concerned about personal and academic integrity. But to be clear about the rules of the road, let me quote from Dean Don Heider's syllabi:

"Loyola University and the School of Communication expect academic integrity and have policies regarding academic dishonesty. Specifically for the SoC:

1. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Plagiarism in your work will result in a minimum of a failing grade for that assignment. The case may carry further sanctions from the School of Communication or the University, the most serious being permanent expulsion. Avoid turning in work that could be interpreted as plagiarism or academically dishonest (e.g., failing to properly credit a source or using someone else's ideas without clarifying that they are not yours). This is an academic community; being uninformed or naïve is not an acceptable excuse for not properly referencing sources.

2. It is dishonest to:

Turn in the same work for two classes;

Turn in a paper you have not written yourself; or

Copy from another student or use a "cheat sheet" during an exam.

Turning in work that is not your own will result in failure on the assignment and possible dismissal from the class.

You can find Loyola's policies regarding academic integrity at:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml. "

Students with disabilities

Loyola's information:

Any student with a learning disability that needs special accommodation during exams or class periods should provide documentation from Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) confidentially to me, early in the semester. I will accommodate those needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

For specifics on services and eligibility, see Loyola's SSWD website:

<http://www.luc.edu/sswd/index.shtml>.

Instructor bio:

Jill Geisler holds the Bill Plante Chair in Leadership and Media Integrity at Loyola University Chicago. She earned her master's degree in leadership studies from Duquesne University and bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Wisconsin. She teaches and coaches teaches leaders across the globe.

Her book: ***Work Happy: What Great Bosses Know*** has been hailed as "an accessible, useful encyclopedia of managerial guidance artfully drawn from Jill Geisler's years as a master boss, learner, teacher and coach." It has been published in English, Portuguese and Korean, with Vietnamese and Russian versions pending. Her "What Great Bosses Know" podcasts on iTunes U have been downloaded millions of times worldwide.

Jill's earliest journalism work was as a reporter, photographer, producer and anchor. She was among the country's first women to lead a major market TV newsroom when she became news director of WITI-TV in Milwaukee in 1978, at the age of 27. Jill led an award-winning team for several decades – a newsroom built on the twin pillars of ethics and enterprise.

In 1998, she joined the faculty of the Poynter Institute, where she guided its leadership and management programs for sixteen years. There, she developed her reputation as a master teacher who turns theory into practical application and action, guiding classes with a healthy touch of humor and humanity. It explains why today she is invited to newsrooms from Boston to Bhutan to help build stronger leaders, teams and journalism.

Jill has been honored by multiple media halls of fame. She was inducted into the Silver Circle of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and presented the University of Wisconsin's "Distinguished Service to Journalism" award. She serves on the advisory board of the Journalism and Women Symposium and as lead faculty for the American Society of News Editors Minority Leadership Institutes.

Jill lives in Bayside, Wisconsin with her husband Neil Jaehnert. They have two sons: Noah, a manager in the field of cyber security and MacNeil, who owns a social media marketing consultancy. Tugboat, an aging canine shelter adoptee, owns them all.